

December 28, 2015
Six o'clock P.M.
North Little Rock City Hall Council Chambers
300 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas

The regular meeting of the North Little Rock City Council scheduled for Monday, December 28, 2015, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Honorable Mayor Joe A. Smith.

The roll having been called and the following Aldermen answered to their names: DEBI ROSS, BETH WHITE, MAURICE TAYLOR, LINDA ROBINSON, STEVE BAXTER, BRUCE FOUTCH, CHARLIE HIGHT and MURRY WITCHER (8/0). City Clerk Diane Whitbey, Deputy City Clerk Katelyn Thomas and City Attorney C. Jason Carter were also present.

The prayer and pledge of allegiance were led by Alderwoman Ross.

On the motion of Alderman Witcher and seconded by Alderman Hight, and by consent of all members present, the minutes from the North Little Rock City Council held on Monday, December 14, 2015, were approved, accepted and filed as prepared by the City Clerk (8/0).

Alderwoman Ross introduced Mr. Chuck Atkins, Senior Vice Commander Department of Arkansas, Mr. Mark Diggs, Commander Chapter 431 and Mr. Richard Maxwell, Senior Vice Commander Chapter 431. Mr. Atkins then addressed Mayor Smith and City Council members. Mr. Atkins advised the Purple Heart is a Combat Decoration and the Nation's oldest military medal and proceeded to review the history of the medal and how it reached its current designation and the criteria to be awarded. In 1992 the Purple Hearts Trails and Cities Program was created to provide a symbolic and honorary way to provide tribute to men and women who have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal. Visual finders (signs or monuments) have been placed throughout the United States in those cities, on highways or bridges that have been designated as Purple Heart Cities (through legislation and proclamations). Mr. Atkins then presented the designation to Mayor Smith and the City Council on behalf of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Arkansas. Mr. Diggs then presented a plaque to Mayor Smith. Mayor Smith then read a proclamation proclaiming North Little Rock as a Purple Heart City. Mayor Smith said we are proud of all of our residents who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service. Mr. Maxwell presented pins to all council member honoring America's Purple Heart Recipients and advised North Little Rock is the first city in Central Arkansas to make this proclamation.

There were no communications filed.

Mayor Smith announced citizen public comment on legislation. No one signed in to speak.

Mayor Smith distributed copies of a report from the November Operation FOCUS in the Baring Cross area of the city. He pointed out that a lot of the problems in the area seemed to be related to people who were visiting the area, but not residents of the same. He commended Mr. Isaac Henry and other staff members who worked on the report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

R-15-164

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS A.F.L.-C.I.O., LOCAL NO. 35; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was called and held by the sponsor, Mayor Smith.

CONSENT AGENDA

None filed.

NEW BUSINESS

R-15-185 (RESOLUTION NO. 8910 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN CITY-OWNED ITEMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AS SURPLUS; PROVIDING FOR AUCTION THEREOF; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read.

On the motion of Alderman Witcher and seconded by Alderman Foutch, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0). (*includes Matthews Barge*)

R-15-186 (RESOLUTION NO. 8911 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE CLOSING DATE FOR THE SALE OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON YOUNG ROAD TO JEL LAND ACQUISITIONS, LLC TO FEBRUARY 29, 2016; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Alderman Hight and seconded by Alderman Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0).

R-15-187 (RESOLUTION NO. 8912 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN EXTENSION OF THE CONTINGENCIES PERIOD ON THE SALE OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 632 WEST RIVERFRONT DRIVE IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Alderman Taylor and seconded by Alderman Foutch, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0).

R-15-188 (RESOLUTION NO. 8913 – MAYOR SMITH)

A RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 8711 (2015 BUDGET); AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Alderman Witcher and seconded by Alderman Hight, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was unanimously adopted (8/0).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Billy Earles spoke regarding the access road to his family cemetery located off of Smokey Lane. The cemetery has been there since the early 1800's. Ms. Geneva Earles asked the council to help them get the road put back. It was a through road at one time. The school bus and mail delivery used it. She used to live past the area that is blocked off. Since then, the area has been sodded and a sprinkler system installed, which has prevented access to the cemetery. Mr. Norman Earles spoke regarding the Richards Cemetery. His daughter has a birthmark similar to his grandfather who is buried in there. He has brought his family to the area and told them about the family history. The cemetery is now surrounded by development. Mr. John Douglas Richards, VI, said his family started burying members in the cemetery in the early 1800's. He is trying to verify if slaves are buried there. He has more to say than he can in three (3) minutes. The road was closed under the previous mayor. He wants it rescinded and the road put back in. It is 70 yards to the entrance of the cemetery and another 30 yards to the gateway. If he had the money, he would hire a lawyer. He has been kept from his ancestors. Alderwoman White referenced R-15-185 and asked where the barge was located. Mayor Smith said it is the Matthews' barge and is on the end. Alderman Baxter said residents should breakdown electronic device boxes before recycling so criminals won't be tempted. He also reminded the public to record serial numbers. In the event something is stolen, this will help police identify it later. Alderman Baxter said the river is expected to crest two (2) feet higher than it did in June and asked about plans for the park and other areas in the city. Over the weekend, employees moved everything they could out of possible flooding areas. Downtown, water may rise to the handicapped parking spots near AIMM. There will be spotty flooding in the area of Gribble. The Police and Fire have an incident response plan in place. Alderman Baxter also asked about barriers in the vicinity of the quarry. Alderman Hight said previous flood waters washed away the bank and some posts. Mayor Smith said the city has worked over the last three (3) years to save money for emergencies. The floods in the Spring of this year cost the city about \$130,000.00. An additional \$30,000.00 was spent to remove accumulated sand (over the past two (2) weeks) around the landing where the city's emergency boats are kept. Mayor Smith is anticipating expenses related to the upcoming flooding event. Mayor Smith said the bottom of the Patriot Barge is in disrepair and unrepairable. This barge had been used to dock the Mark Twain Riverboat. Experts have been in to look at it and figure out how to get it out of the water so it can be salvaged. If it sinks, it will be expensive to resolve the issue. The lease with the Mark Twain had to be ended due to lack of a location to dock the boat. Also, the high river has caused issues at the ball park (Dickey-Stephens) because of high groundwater. Sink holes have caused problems over the past seven (7) years. When construction was concluded, it was understood this could be an issue, therefore, mitigation with the contractors, architects, etc. resulted in a settlement (\$160,000.00). City Engineer Chris Wilbourn is working on the anticipated cost. Diamond Construction of North Little Rock does a lot of work for (North Little Rock) Waste Water and are familiar with underground work. Waiving bids may be required. The baseball team begins playing March 15, 2016. Alderwoman Ross said Sales Tax collections were up for the year. Mayor Smith said the city's financials are in great shape and thanked city department for keeping their budgets in line.

There being no further business to come before the Council, and on the motion of Alderwoman Ross and seconded by Alderman Taylor, and by consent of all members present, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m. (8/0), until the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be held on Monday, January 11, 2016, at six o'clock p.m. in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 300 Main Street, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

APPROVED: _____
MAYOR JOE A. SMITH

ATTEST: _____
DIANE WHITBEY, CITY CLERK